Star Special

THE STAR, THURSDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2026

EDUCATION GUIDE

Innovating every bite

THE first bite was warm, comforting and familiar. Then, you analysed the texture – slightly crisp and golden – giving way to a soft, chewy interior.

That is when you know the bagel tastes great. The next bite pulls you deeper with its subtle aroma of toasted grain, and it plasters a pleasing smile on your face.

What is more, the texture is dense yet tender – the right balance of chew and spring, accompanied by a mild wheat sweetness. It was simple, calming and deeply satisfying.

The third bite followed, and the rest was a memorable moment that took place in your favourite cafe.

You might think food innovation is all about trendy drinks, viral snacks or aesthetic packaging, but the real innovation actually goes deeper.

So that delicious bite you took? – it was not by accident; that was innovation. Each bite was thoroughly researched and engineered – how the dough was formulated, how it was fermented, and how to keep it fresh – all to ensure it tastes great, stays safe and maybe even goes viral.

Certainly, food innovation is not limited to one path alone. Chefs, bakers, home cooks and food creators have been innovating food for generations, right in their kitchens and bakeries, long before it entered the laboratory.

It is important to remember that food science does not replace that creativity, but rather, it complements and builds on that innovation.

Decoding the perfect bite

That careful research behind producing that delicious first bite from your bagel is the result of deep understanding that comes from food science.

More specifically, it comes from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman's (UTAR) special Food Product Innovation course, where students will formulate new food products, optimise production and shelf life, conduct sensory tests in UTAR's food processing and sensory labs, and even market their creations – preparing them for real food technology industry challenges.

This course is embedded in the Bachelor of Science (Hons) Food Science programme, offered at UTAR, under the Faculty of Science.

UTAR's Faculty of Science serves as a hub where curiosity is transformed into professional capability.

Department of Agricultural and Food Science head Dr Clement Wong Kiing Fook expressed, "With Malaysia's expanding food and beverage industry and growing emphasis on food safety, functional foods, nutraceuticals, and regulatory compliance, Food Science graduates play a vital role.

"They will be responsible for developing healthier products, improving production efficiency, reducing waste, and meeting evolving consumer and regulatory demands. In today's era, Food Science is one of the key forces in shaping the future of how food is produced, regulated and experienced."

Practical skills for a global industry

In the real world, it would look something like this: you will take raw ingredients and learn how to store, process, preserve and distribute them while keeping the ingredients safe, nutritious and high-quality.

You will also analyse how different ingredients interact, monitor food deterioration, identify microbial risks and apply process controls to solve problems.

As you experience these hands-on approaches, you will also develop the skills and abilities to turn ideas into safe and innovative food products that food manufacturers, regulatory agencies, research institutions and multinational companies value most.

Now ask yourself, are you ready to step into this world, challenge how food is made, and surprise people's taste buds?

Then the Bachelor of Science (Hons) Food Science programme is where it begins. Become part of the next generation of food innovators – one bite at a time.

UTAR offers over 140 programmes ranging from foundation studies to bachelor's, master's and PhD degrees across disciplines including Business, Finance, Science, Engineering, Creative Industries, Information Technology, Education and Medicine and Health Sciences.

■ For more information, visit *www.utar.edu.my* or call 05-468 8888 (Kampar Campus) or 03-9086 0288 (Sungai Long Campus). Visitors can walk in or call for any enquiries on weekdays from 9am to 5pm (closed on public holidays).

Consecutive Putra Aria Gold Award for MSU

MANAGEMENT and Science University (MSU) has been accorded the Gold Award at the Putra Aria Brand Awards 2025 under the Education and Learning category, marking another significant milestone in strengthening its position as a trusted higher education institution in Malaysia.

The recognition further reinforces MSU's brand strength, enhances sustained public confidence and reflects the university's commitment to delivering quality education that is relevant to industry needs and societal development.

The Putra Aria Brand Awards is among the country's most prestigious brand recognition platforms, honouring organisations based on excellence, resilience and meaningful contributions within their respective sectors.

This marks the second consecutive year MSU has been recognised as a Gold Award recipient, following its achievements as a Silver Award winner at the 2023 Putra Aria Brand Awards and a Bronze Award recipient in 2022.

MSU president and founder Prof Tan Sri Dr Mohd Shukri Ab Yajid (centre) posing with MSU's Putra Aria Brand Awards 2025 gold trophy. With him are vice-president (media and strategic communication) Norizah Mohd Said (left) and Rosli.

With this latest accolade, MSU continues to demonstrate its dedication to advancing higher education excellence while contributing to nation-building and the broader global community.

Receiving the award on behalf of MSU was senior vice-president (endowment and communications) Datuk Rosli Yusof.

This recognition demonstrates MSU's ongoing commitment to building a higher education brand that is close to the community and trusted both in Malaysia and globally.

It also motivates the varsity's community to continue enhancing educational quality through 21st-century teaching and learning approaches, aimed at producing graduates who are balanced, competent and versatile, in line with the university's motto, Transforming Lives, Enriching Futures.

In addition, MSU actively drives the digital transformation and lifelong learning agenda by offering flexible education pathways, including work-based learning and recognition of prior experiential learning.

Excellence in tax and accounting

LOCAL institution Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TAR UMT) continues to make its mark on the regional and international stage, building a strong legacy of success in tax-related competitions.

Year after year, its students have proven their mettle, securing top honours and reaffirming TAR UMT's reputation as a powerhouse in accounting and taxation education.

Beyond producing champions, the university has cultivated an ecosystem that nurtures talent, sharpens analytical thinking, and instils confidence in its students to take on global challenges.

Among the recent achievers is Genevere Foo Wen Shun, who, together with her team, emerged as the second runner-up and Best Writer Award recipient in the team category at the Deloitte Tax Challenge South-East Asia (SEA) 2025.

Another proud TAR UMT alumna, Sak Nuan Yan, clinched the champion title in the 2025 YYC Tax Challenge (Country Level). She was also champion of Deloitte Audit Business Challenge (National Level) 2024 and third runner-up for HSBC Malaysia Business Case Competition 2024.

Ooi Wei Xuen won the EY Young Tax Professional of the Year 2025 (EY YTPY) (Country Winner), having also been named champion of the Dell Business Challenge 2025, YYC TaxPOD Challenge 2024. Additionally, Ooi was named first runner-up of the SME Bank Sandbox Swiss Innovation Challenge 2024.

Their remarkable accomplishments not only reflect individual and team excellence but also the strength of TAR UMT's education, mentorship, and experiential learning ecosystem.

For Foo, who graduated from the Bachelor of Commerce (Hons) programme in June 2025, the regional level of the Deloitte Tax Challenge SEA 2025 was a defining experience.

"Mentally, I had to be very strong because the competition became much more intense. As a team, we constantly updated ourselves on the latest international tax rules and regulations, and Deloitte Malaysia even assigned us a mentor who guided us throughout our preparations, providing in-depth briefings on the latest Transfer Pricing guidelines."

The victory, however, was more than a medal – it was a reflection of the learning journey she experienced at TAR UMT.

"From diploma to degree level, we did many presentations for our coursework. These experiences trained me to speak confidently, maintain a steady tone, and make effective eye contact, all of which improved my performance during the competition," she explained.

Now an Audit Associate at Deloitte, Foo continues to apply the communication and analytical skills honed during her studies.

For Sak, being crowned champion of the 2025 YYC Tax Challenge (Country Level) was both a humbling and empowering experience.

Now pursuing her MSc in Accounting and Finance at the University of Manchester after obtaining First Class Honours in the Bachelor of Commerce (Hons) programme from TAR UMT, she shared, "For my degree, it was important for us to learn how to apply theoretical concepts to real-world contexts through case studies, projects, and presentations.

"Even though I competed alone in the competition, the experience of working in a team and exposure to doing many presentations in classes helped me communicate my answers effectively under pressure.

"I will also always appreciate the support and motivation I got from my lecturers and peers as their trust gave me the confidence to perform my best, especially during the most challenging moments of preparation" she added.

For Ooi, a Bachelor of Business (Hons) Accounting and Finance graduate with an impressive list of competition accolades, TAR UMT provided the foundation that allowed him to thrive.

Ooi shared that having patient and knowledgeable lecturers who addressed his questions played a crucial role in his learning journey.

"I am a person with an 'asking mindset'. For me, it is more important to understand a subject matter rather than studying just for exams.

"As such, having lecturers who are patient and knowledgeable in addressing all my questions worked very well for me.

"Their expertise helped me build a solid foundation that became extremely valuable when competing at national and international levels.

"Our many assignments also required us to design presentation decks and provide our own analysis or strategies on tax matters, which enhanced both my technical and analytical thinking."

Describing TAR UMT's learning environment, he noted, "The university has a very supportive and dynamic ecosystem.

"Through research projects, presentations, and case-based assignments, I was exposed to situations that required critical analysis and confident communication, the same skills that helped me excel in competitions like the EY Young Tax Professional of the Year."

All three students attribute their success to TAR UMT's holistic ecosystem that combines academic rigour with mentorship, collaboration, and real-world exposure.

■ To find out more about TAR UMT accountancy, finance and business programmes, join the university's Open Day from March 14-15 and 28-29 from 10am to 5pm, or visit *www.tarc.edu.my*.

Alternatively, contact FAFB at 011-1054 8256/011-1059 7109 or email them at fafb@tarc.edu.my. Prospective students are encouraged to apply online at *www.tarc.edu.my*. Various financial aid are also available for qualified students.

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MSU College's Diploma in Graphic Design programme is designed to unleash student creativity and prepare graduates for the fast-evolving creative industry.

Unlock your creativity

GRAPHIC design is more than just creating images – it's the powerful art of communicating ideas, emotions and stories through visual and textual elements.

From stunning advertisements and impactful branding to sleek web designs and captivating magazine layouts, graphic design shapes how the world sees and experiences ideas.

At Management and Science University (MSU) College, the School of Science and Technology offers a Diploma in Graphic Design programme, designed to unleash your creativity and prepare you for the fast-evolving creative industry.

This comprehensive two-and-a-half-year programme blends artistic vision with practical industry skills, empowering you to become a confident, innovative and industry-ready designer.

Among the programme highlights is that students will be able to explore a wide spectrum of subjects, thoughtfully selected to strengthen both creative and technical capabilities. This includes visual communication, typography, communication skills, advertising design and interactive multimedia.

Graduates of this programme are prepared to step confidently into diverse roles such as graphic designer, layout artist, technical illustrator, art director and creative director.

You'll find opportunities in fields such as advertising, branding, corporate identity, packaging design, digital media, app design, signage and website development – anywhere creativity meets communication.

Entry requirements for the programme are a pass in the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) or its equivalent with three credits in any subject, or an MSU College certificate in a related field with passes in all subjects.

Upon completing your diploma, you may advance directly into the second year of the bachelor's programme at MSU via the Faculty of Information Sciences and Engineering.

MSU College is also the MSU APEL Centre for potential candidates to take the APEL Aptitude Test as the non-conventional pre-qualification for entry into higher studies, in which MSU currently offers APEL A and APEL C at T-3 (Certificate), T-4 (Diploma), T-6 (Bachelor's) and T-7 (Master's) levels.

■ For more information, call 06-764 8686 or 03-5521 6868, email enquiry@msucollege.my, or visit *www.msucollege.edu.my*

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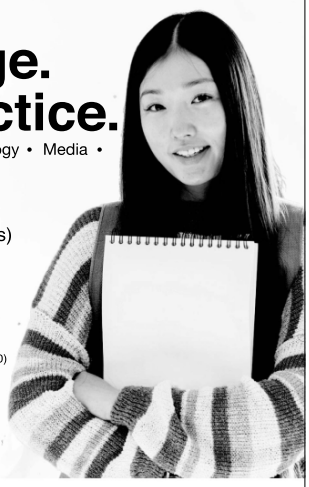

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